

ANARCHISM WITHOUT ADJECTIVES: ON THE WORK OF CHRISTOPHER D'ARCANGELO, 1975–1979

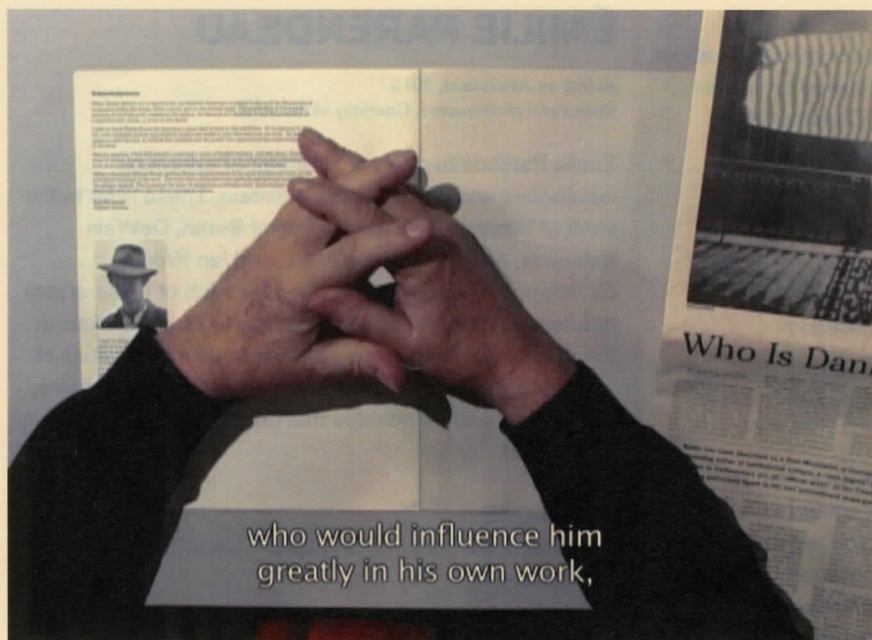
CURATORS: DEAN INKSTER AND SÉBASTIEN PLUOT
IN COLLABORATION WITH MICHÈLE THÉRIAULT

VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH STEPHEN ANTONAKOS, BENJAMIN H. D.
BUCHLOH, DANIEL BUREN, BEN KINMONT, PETER NADIN, NAOMI
SPECTOR, LAWRENCE WEINER

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF PIERRE BAL-BLANC, SOPHIE BÉLAIR
CLÉMENT, SIMON BROWN, BEN KINMONT, SILVIA KOLBOWSKI,
PIERRE LEGUILLON, FRANÇOIS LEMIEUX, RAINER OLDENDORF,
ÉMILIE PARENDEAU, NICOLINE VAN HARSKAMP



SEPTEMBER 4 – OCTOBER 26, 2013



who would influence him
greatly in his own work,

Still from interview with Daniel Buren, Varenne-Jarcy, 2006, conducted by Dean Inkster and Sébastien Pluot.

WAYS OF THINKING

Ways of Thinking is designed for anyone interested in exploring contemporary art and its exhibition framework. It offers succinct and synthesized information on the exhibition's concept, the artists and the works featured. For the complete version of *Ways of Thinking* that includes bibliographic references, please see our website: www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/

Between 1975 and 1979, the North American artist Christopher D'Arcangelo (1955–1979) developed an artistic practice that was notable for its radicality and critical import concerning the role of the artist, the status of the art object and the institutionalization of art. A desire for a radical democratization of the production and reception of art motivated D'Arcangelo's institutional critique, which he voiced in a statement on anarchism. Recalling the historical expression "anarchism without adjectives," the statement, which accompanied the majority of his actions and interventions, contains an ellipsis between brackets in the place of an adjectival descriptor of the noun anarchism.

Although interest in D'Arcangelo has not been entirely absent over the last thirty years, to date, no posthumous exhibition or critical evaluation of his work has been undertaken. The written and visual documents that D'Arcangelo compiled to chronicle his practice have been made available at the Fales Library & Special Collections, New York University, following a donation in 2009 by Cathy Weiner and the D'Arcangelo Family Partnership to the library's "Downtown Collection."

Testifying to an artist engaged in a critique of the social conditions and repercussions of art, and whose work is accessible solely in the form of an archive, represents a challenge to both contemporary art history and curatorial practice. It is this challenge, along with the paradoxes and critical complexities D'Arcangelo's work and legacy raise, that the exhibition considers and analyzes.

Since its inauguration at the CAC Brétigny, France, in July 2011, the exhibition *Anarchism Without Adjectives* has been presented at Artists Space (New York), the Centro Cultural Montehermoso (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Espagne) and Extra City (Antwerp, Belgium). With the aim of being both retrospective and prospective, and as a form of ongoing research, each presentation of the exhibition has benefited from the contributions of an evolving roster of artists and of curators at each venue. For the current presentation, the curators, in collaboration with Michèle Thériault, have thus invited local and international artists, some of whom have previously participated, to contribute existing or new works as a means of generating further dialogue on the contemporary significance of the questions Christopher D'Arcangelo raised in his practice.

PIERRE BAL-BLANC

Tomorrow I Go to the MoMA, 2012
Video documentation of a presentation within the framework of the symposium, *How Are We Performing Today? New Formats, Places, and Practices of Performance-Related Art*, MoMA, November 17, 2012. 26 min. 47 sec.
Video Recordings of Museum-Related Events, 2013–3. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York

A presentation that addresses challenges encountered in exhibiting (and speaking about) undocumented performances and actions. Christopher D'Arcangelo's MoMA Action (28 February 1975) is one example of such and action which Bal-Blanc expands on through a reinvestigation of the context in which it was produced.

EXPLORE

- the means by which Pierre Bal-Blanc presents two undocumented actions by two different artists;
- notions of reiteration and repetition and why Bal-Blanc considers these to be important in thinking about, presenting, and discussing actions and performance.

SOPHIE BÉLAIR CLÉMENT

Reads Plato's Parmenides? 1978, 2005, 2013, 2013
Wall paint, self-adhesive vinyl, monitor, DVD, audio, vinyl digital prints, chair. Courtesy of the artist.

At the very end of the file brought together by the curators, my reading was interrupted by a series of questions at the bottom of the last document, *Chronology (from archives established by Gideon d'Arcangelo)*, on page 92:
Questions: worked for artist Robert Mangold?
Meets Ian Wilson? Reads Plato's *Parmenides*?
Moved into 119 Elizabeth Street? Proposes collaboration with Allan McCollum?
This break in the historical narrative was the starting point of my speculative research, contextual to the content of the exhibition *Anarchism Without Adjectives: On the Work of Christopher D'Arcangelo (1975–1979)*. The *Chronology* traces a portrait of the artist from a series of events – relational and professional networks, trajectories; so many contingencies guiding a *posteriori* a reading of the work in its absence. However, Plato's *Parmenides*, as an un-situated event, opens the possibility of a second narrative: that of the content of knowledge that is acquired and exchanged, dialogical; that of the history of a mediation and its translations.

EXPLORE

- mediation of one artist's work by another or others and how this is addressed in Bélaïr Clément's work;
- the ways in which this work takes into consideration knowledge, its acquisition and exchange, and how it contributes to the development of artistic (and curatorial) research.

SIMON BROWN

Chris, Simon & Jennifer, 2013
Photocopied publication. Courtesy of the artist.

Sometimes you find what you're looking for. Sometimes research is a dead end. Sometimes you find the connections by following your first instinct. Sometimes you find them accidentally. Sometimes there aren't any connections. Sometimes you have to make them up. Sometimes you are the connection.

EXPLORE

- notions of reference, connection, and transformation and how they reveal themselves in this work;
- self-effacement.

BEN KINMONT

Project Series: Christopher D'Arcangelo Distribution (March 5, 2005, Paris), 2005
Video documentation of an action at the Louvre, Paris. 17 min. 10 sec.
Project Series: Christopher D'Arcangelo, Paris: Antinomian Press, 2005
A4 publication (originally written in 1997). Document downloaded, 2013: www.antinomianpress.org. Reprint, Leonard & Bina Ellen Gallery, 2013. Courtesy of the artist.

On Saturday, March 5th, 2005, Ben Kinmont and the Antinomian Press conducted a public publishing project from a van in front of the Louvre. This one-day publishing event produced a small book concerning the work of Christopher D'Arcangelo and his action inside the Louvre.

EXPLORE

- the ways in which this work addresses questions about how an artist functions in a market-based art system;
- where the boundaries lie between Christopher D'Arcangelo's work and Ben Kinmont's work.

SILVIA KOLBOWSKI

an inadequate history of conceptual art, 1998/1999
Video and sound looped 55 min.
This presentation is an excerpt of the work that combines audio and video. The original work is longer and separates the audio and video into separate but interconnected rooms. Courtesy of the artist.

In 1998, I sent letters to sixty artists, asking them to participate in this project. Forty artists agreed to respond to the following statement: "Briefly describe a conceptual art work, not your own, of the period between 1965 and 1975, which you personally witnessed/experienced at the time. For the sake of this project, the definition of conceptual art would be broad enough to encompass such phenomena of that period as actions documented through drawings, photographs, films, and video; concepts executed in the form of drawings or photographs; objects where the end product is primarily a record of the precipitant concept, and performative activities which sought to question the conventions of dance and theater."

EXPLORE

- official and unofficial histories, memory and its failures;
- the impact and effect of non-synchronous sound and image.

PIERRE LEGUILLON

Untitled, 2008
Digital transfer of an original slide (60 x 60 mm), photographic inkjet print. Courtesy of the artist.

Photograph taken at the Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, June 2008. The slide shows a double-page spread from Christopher D'Arcangelo's "LAICA as an Alternative to Museums," published in LAICA: Journal of the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, no. 13, January/February 1977.

EXPLORE

- the function of language in this work;
- sources and references, the musings they generate, and how all of these are revealed in this work.

FRANÇOIS LEMIEUX

« Et la télévision inventa le samedi matin », 2013
Framed bibliography, poem available at the reception desk. Courtesy of the artist.

François Lemieux is inspired by surrealist language games drawn from a cartography of contemporary anarchist and communist speeches. The poem he presents underlines how many worlds there are that demand – in order to adequately take them into account – that one must let go, remain enchanted or shut up.

EXPLORE

- la fonction du langage dans ce travail;
- les sources et les références, les réflexions qu'elles engendrent, et leur façon de se concrétiser dans l'œuvre.

RAINER OLDENDORF

We Intended to Provoke Them, Didn't We? They Just Wanted to Try Something Out. Reading Reading Notes, 1974–2013
Contribution to "Anarchism Without Adjectives: On the Work of Christopher D'Arcangelo, 1975–1979". Sculpture and painting. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Erna Hecey, Brussels.

Struc-Tube exhibition system. George Nelson Office, 1947 (reconstruction by Martin Beck, 2005). Aluminum.

In producing this work I used my personal archives, including documents I kept from the time when I was 13 to 17 years old. These cover Christopher D'Arcangelo's working period, 1975–79, exactly. The result is a *tableau* of photocopied texts and images.

EXPLORE

- notions of frame of reference and historical interest: how they operate in this work and how they contribute to a deeper understanding of the exhibition;
- the display system, the types of materials used, and their narrative function or value.

ÉMILIE PARENDEAU

Artist as Assistant, 2013
Books and photocopies. Courtesy of the artist.

Émilie Parendeau offers a selection of exhibition catalogues and books for consultation. These refer to the work of Stephen Antonakos, Daniel Buren, DeWain Valentine, Alex Katz, Mario Merz, and Ian Wilson. Christopher D'Arcangelo worked for each of these artists, occasionally for exhibitions or on a more regular basis in the studio. Opening these books reveals the activities of an artist's assistant and retraces the path of encounters, exchanges, and friendships that contributed to his journey as an artist.

EXPLORE

- the narrative constructed about Christopher D'Arcangelo;
- the scope and provenance of the materials used in constructing this narrative.

NICOLINE VAN HARSKAMP

Yours in Solidarity, 2013
80 framed notes on A4 paper, 2 subtitled audio tracks (21. min 30 sec. and 28 min. 19 sec.), 1 video track (43 min. 46 sec.)
Made possible with the generous support of Netherlands Film Fund, Mondriaan Fund, Rijksakademie, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam. Courtesy of D+T Project, Gallery, Brussels.

In *Yours in Solidarity*, Nicoline van Harskamp tells the story of a global network of anarchists in the 1990's, through the analysis of the correspondence archive of the late Dutch anarchist Karl Max Kreuger, now housed in the International Institute for Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam.

EXPLORE

- the various elements of this work and how they relate to each other and function as a whole;
- the political content of this work and how it is communicated.

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